

The Church Problem in Edinburgh



**By
TWO
CHURCHMEN**



**Edinburgh and Glasgow
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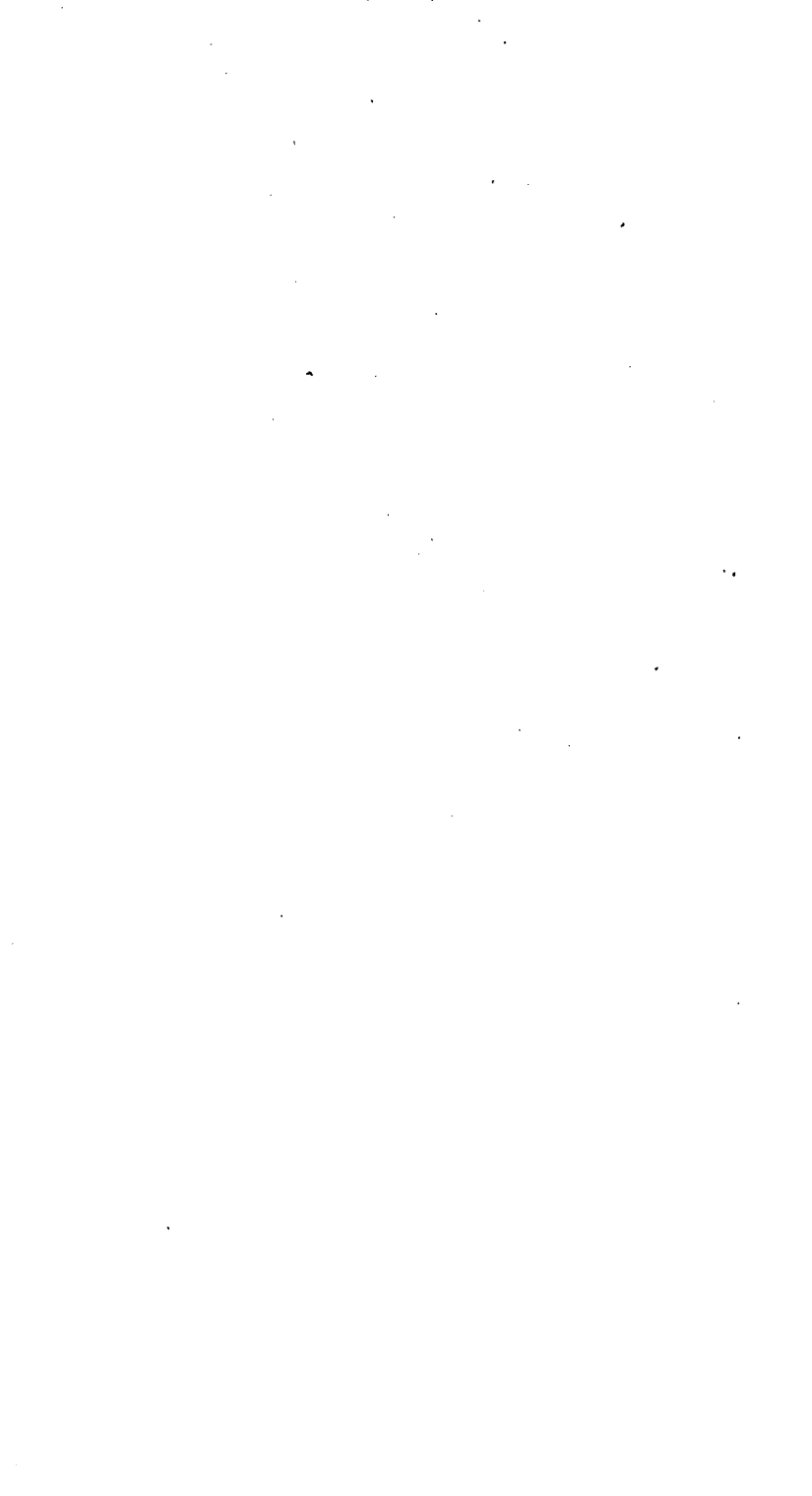
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THE
THE CHURCH PROBLEM
IN EDINBURGH:

BY
TWO CHURCHMEN.

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PREFACE.

THE writers venture to offer to the public the following Papers on Church problems in Edinburgh. The facts and figures given have been gathered with great care from reliable (mostly official) sources. In some cases accurate information is not easily accessible, and it is quite possible that an error may have inadvertently crept in here and there. It is believed, however, that the conclusions arrived at are amply proved, and any little minimising of a fact does not alter the main contention, or at any rate does not relieve serious minds from the burden of thoughtfully facing a grave situation.

The Papers are intended as a small contribution towards the solution of the difficult problems now confronting the Churches in Scotland, and the aim of the writers will in large measure be attained if they help to focus attention on some aspects of these problems which current ecclesiastical events may tend to obscure.

The standpoint of the writers, it may be added, is not hostile but wholly sympathetic to the Churches. They are, of course, aware, and are not unmindful, of much excellent work carried on in quiet ways and with self-sacrifice in branches of Christian service not referred to in the following pages. If, therefore, the Papers contain some hard sayings, and if unpalatable facts and figures are stated without any attempted gloss, it is because the writers consider that, to be useful, a diagnosis of social and religious life must fearlessly take into consideration all the symptoms of the case.

EDINBURGH, *September*, 1904.

I.—SOCIAL EDINBURGH.

POPULATION AND HOUSING.

I.—SOCIAL EDINBURGH.

POPULATION AND HOUSING.

SCOTLAND is resounding with the noise of ecclesiastical strife. The decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal in the great Church case has brought shadows into the religious sky, and men look inquiringly into the future. Old theories of the constitution of Churches have been shattered, and the situation thus created brings into sharp prominence the whole range of Church life and work, and causes it to be passed closely under review with varying degrees of intelligence. One result at least is that men are discussing the basis of future organisation. Narrowly considered, the problem facing Scotland is mental and theological. In reality it is of much wider scope. Be the theological basis of the reconstructed United Free Church what it may, the question of whether it will worthily survive the fiery ordeal through which it is passing depends on some additional considerations. Foremost among these is the manner in which she means to respond to the cry of the people to put forth her strength in facing the altered conditions of twentieth-century life in order to save the souls and bodies of men from the remorseless forces which are unmaking manhood. So far, the Churches have to a large extent been deaf to the cry of the multitude. They have not been in the midst, and if they now wish the people

to rally to their aid they must learn, even if by bitter experience, to rally to the aid of the people.

Scope of the Inquiry.

“What are the Churches doing? What is to be their future?” These and such like questions are being asked by hundreds in Scotland to-day. The following pages do not profess to give conclusive answers to these questions. It is proposed, however, to state some facts and considerations necessary to be known and weighed by all whose business it is to provide for the religious wants of the people.

The matter can perhaps best be looked at by limiting the scope of the inquiry. Mainly, therefore, confining the outlook to Edinburgh, it is intended to state as clearly and definitely, but as concisely, as possible, the outstanding facts relative to the social and religious life of the city, to study briefly the sufficiency and effectiveness of Church organisation, the success or failure of existing Church methods, and to estimate, as far as that can be done, the progress or retrogression of religious life and influences.

Prevailing ignorance.

Any one who takes the trouble to observe can see that statements are frequently made, even by men in high places in the ecclesiastical world, carelessly assuming facts and tendencies which some slight investigation and observation would show to be far from the actual case. Often mere platitudes are talked, which, although perhaps true enough, are not founded on experience of facts, and so are never translated into action. Again, social evils and Church problems are frequently discussed with-

out specialised knowledge of the subject. Ministers themselves have drawn attention to the fact that the clergy are inadequately equipped with even elementary notions of the conditions under which the people live. The following overture was recently submitted to the Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland :—

“That the General Assembly should instruct the Home Mission Committee, in providing for the training of the students in Pastoral Theology to take measures whereby they may receive adequate instruction in the economic and moral causes of the degrading poverty which is one of the chief hindrances to the diffusion of true religion, the principles and practice of poor law administration, the history, experience, and results of the leading voluntary associations that are working for social amelioration, the outlines of recent legislation affecting housing, sanitation, child life, licensing, etc., which bear distinctly upon the lives of the masses among whom they may be called to labour.”

This is a step in the right direction, and indicates the kind of Natural Science that would repay any attention given to it by the Churches. The best intention to ameliorate social wrongs, or to solve moral and religious problems, must be hopelessly handicapped unless the situation to be dealt with is thoroughly understood in all its aspects, and that by every man who is called to put his hand to the ordering of the chaos.

The community of Edinburgh is a manageable aggregate. The facts affecting its social and

Social
Conditions of
Edinburgh.

religious problems can be ascertained with approximate correctness, conditions can be more or less accurately diagnosed, and cause and effect can be fairly estimated. In dealing with larger communities, such as London or Glasgow, complexities emerge which make it difficult to present at one view the general facts and circumstances relating to any particular phase of the life of the people. On the other hand, in dealing with smaller towns, social classification, as regards geographical distribution, becomes rather more difficult.

It is proposed first to take a rapid survey of the physiological conditions of what may be called "the raw material" on which religious influences have to work. Men need not attempt to deal with the problem until they appreciate and master "the physiological basis of psychology." In this connection the conditions which unmake manhood are of as much importance as those which renew it, and it must be emphasised that the only point of view from which social subjects can effectively be touched is that of him whose object is to save and sweeten life. The making of manhood must be the chief concern, and must not be subordinated to the desire to show ever-increasing figures and larger finances in Church Blue Books. This craze for Blue Book prosperity is just a symptom of the effect on the Churches of the materialism which has swept like a black curse over the land. Some of the following facts have been stated and re-stated, but it is necessary to emphasise them until they touch the imagination,

burn into the consciences, and move the wills of those who should know them.

The population of the City of Edinburgh, ^{Population.} according to the census of 1901, was 316,523, being an increase of 21 per cent. in ten years.* The comparison of population in 1901 with 1891 is not strictly correct geographically, as the city boundaries have been extended from time to time, but the figures stated will serve present purposes. The rate of increase is much the same as in the other three large towns in Scotland. The composition of such a vast population varies from the peer to the pauper, includes Jew and Gentile, men of nearly all religions and of no religion.

Edinburgh is differentiated from other towns of ^{Occupation.} its size by the relative proportion of the various classes in the community. In 1891 (the census returns of which admit most readily of a classification of this kind) the occupations of the people, per cent. of the population, were—

Professional,	...	...	...	6'4
Domestic,	...	...	...	8'6
Commercial,	...	...	...	6'3
Agricultural,	...	...	...	'5
Industrial,	...	...	...	25'1
Unoccupied (women, children, &c.),				53'1

100'0

In the other large towns in Scotland there is a much larger proportion of the industrial and commercial classes. As compared with Glasgow there is shown a much larger proportion of well-to-do resident population. It is difficult to dogmatise on

* It should be explained that Leith and Portobello are not included in this study.

this point, but a fairly satisfactory test may be found in a comparison of the number of domestic servants employed in these cities respectively. Such a comparison at least illustrates the contention. According to the census returns of 1901 the domestic indoor servants in Edinburgh were more numerous by 1830 than in Glasgow, the percentages to population in the chief towns being—

Edinburgh,	...	...	...	5'03
Glasgow,	...	...	...	2'02
Dundee,	...	...	...	1'93

The point is further illustrated by the proportion of professional classes.

It might naturally be concluded that the apparently larger than usual proportion of well-to-do residents should be beneficially reflected in the social condition of the people. It has, unfortunately, the opposite influence. The real or affected social position of the domestic-servant-keeping part of the community has the effect of setting up a well-defined caste system, under which each layer of the social strata is separated from the one immediately above almost as effectively as though Buddhism and not Christianity were the religion of the people. In any case, it is not over-stating the situation in Edinburgh to say that society, even in the sphere of Church influences, is not built on the principle that there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. A man in the lower layers of the social strata has never a moment's relief from the awful pressure above ; and as for the under-dog at the bottom of the abyss, on all human considerations it were better for him that he had never been born.

Turn now to a short consideration of the facts Moral and Social Conditions. relative to the circumstances affecting the moral and religious life of a people. Speaking generally, these fall under the following heads :—

- (1) Housing.
- (2) Crime and Drink.
- (3) Poverty.
- (4) Recreation and Sport.
- (5) Religious Influences.

The Housing Problem.—The ideal centre of a Housing. man's life is the home ; but a study of the housing conditions of any large city is apt to beget a mood of despair. The appalling conditions under which about half the population live are hardly dreamed of by the other half. The housing factor alone bulks so largely in the circumstances which make successful social and religious work almost impossible that it cannot be dwelt on at too great length.

More than a fifth of our fellow-citizens are herded together worse than beasts, and one-third live under crowded conditions—that is, more than two persons to a room. The official figures quite bear out this statement. In Edinburgh in 1901 there were, according to the census returns, 71,504 families occupying separate dwellings, varying from the semi-cellar of the Cowgate Close to a mansion in Drumshough. In the case of over 12,000 of these *each family occupied only one room*. In 4794 cases the “family” consisted of only one person, inferring no overcrowding. But in 4238 cases the family consisted of three or more persons, and in 581 of these of six or more persons. In the same year,

according to the authority of the census, 22,487 families occupied only two rooms each, and of these families over 9000 consisted of five persons and upwards, while 5808 consisted of six persons or more. To put the matter in another form, out of a total of 71,504 families in beautiful Edinburgh in the year of grace 1901, 34,631 families, or 48 per cent. of the whole, lived in one or two rooms per family. So far the figures deal only with families, and are even then sombre enough.

Number of
persons per
room.

But the facts are quite startling if the average number of persons *to a room* is considered. Over 67,000 persons live three or more to a room. These may be shortly tabulated as follows :—

3 to a room,	...	...	...	...	24,516
Over 3 and not exceeding 4,	...	...	...	...	27,837
" 4 "	"	5,	...	...	10,037
" 5 "	"	6,	...	...	3,136
" 6,	...	...	...	...	1,746

Under such conditions the comforts of life, not to speak of ordinary decency, are manifestly out of the question. Privacy, that great creator of self-respect and independence, is impossible. To make matters worse, the smaller and meaner the house the greater is the overcrowding. Leaving out of account those cases where the numbers of persons do not exceed three to a room, we have the following result in one-, two-, and three-roomed houses respectively :—

Rooms per House.	No. of Families living more than three to a Room.	No. of Rooms.	No. of Persons living more than three to a Room.	No. of Persons per Room.
1	2477	2477	12,516	5'5
2	3352	6714	26,227	3'9
3	392	1176	4,177	3'4

The general condition of the one- and two-roomed house need not be referred to except to emphasise the fact that the greatest overcrowding is found in the worst class of house. There are over 3500 houses rented at under £5, and nearly 17,000 houses under £10. Should any one want to know practically how the poor are housed, let him go and look for a one- or two-roomed house in, say, the Pleasance district.

These figures suggest that the housing of about one-half of the population of Edinburgh militates severely against the proper moral and social well-being of the community. It is an element that challenges the Church to strain every resource and to put forth her very best efforts. The Church is challenged because at least part of the overcrowding is due to moral causes, and also because overcrowding reacts in startlingly greater degree to the production of moral chaos. The earnest measures taken by the Corporation to deal with the Housing Problem, which have been attended with a large amount of success, are not to be lost sight of, but the evil is so great that the situation is not appreciably affected. In all large towns there is what may be called a house famine. A working man with a moderate wage cannot afford the high rent of a suitable house in a decent locality, and is compelled to put up with insufficient accommodation at a rack rent in crowded districts. It is high time that the Government set about the appointment of a Fair Rent Commission in each of the large towns to check the exactions of mulcting landlords. Rents in Edinburgh are

Housing and
Morals.

considerably higher than in other cities of similar size, the rental per head of population being much larger than in any other of our large towns. The Valuation Roll of the city is not published, and full information as to the known rack-renting and the high feu-duties is difficult to obtain. It is a subject on which some daylight might not be amiss, as the overcrowding of a population makes itself at once felt in the rate of mortality, drunkenness, and crime.

Death-rate.

The death-rate per 1000 of the population of the City in 1902 was 15·83. Contrasting an overcrowded area—the Old Town—with the Southern Registration District, the death-rate is 22·87 against 13·05. People in St. Leonards are herded 254 to the acre (a condition of things which apparently cannot be matched in the East End of London, the Burgh of Shoreditch, which is about the most crowded square mile in the metropolis, showing only 189 persons to the acre), or, *including streets and all open ground*, they could stand about 13 feet apart on the flat, while in the West End (Haymarket ward) or the Southern Suburbs (Morningside ward)—after excluding half the extent of each ward as unbuilt on—the well-to-do are allowed over 1500 square feet each. The difference in the condition of life means that 18·3 per 1000 die annually in St. Leonards, while only about 12·5 per 1000 die each year in Haymarket or Morningside. An epidemic descends like a wolf on the fold on the overcrowded districts. Sir Henry Littlejohn, Medical Officer of Health for

the City, in his annual report for 1903, says—"In typhoid fever the Old Town is seen to be responsible for more than double the number of cases in proportion to population than either the New Town or the Southern Suburbs."

"Slum conditions lead to drunkenness," observes Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, "and drunkenness leads to the creation and toleration of slum conditions." It is not to be too readily supposed that drunkenness is due to inherent vice. The drunkenness is not to be more deplored than the condition of things which makes drunkenness almost inevitable. Have the Churches in Scotland recognised the connection? They appoint Temperance Committees and denounce the evils of intemperance. What have they done towards the removal of the social evils which cause so much of the intemperance of the country? Is it unfair to suggest that up to the present they have merely been tinkering at effects, leaving the cause untouched?

II.—SOCIAL EDINBURGH.

CRIME AND DRINK, AND POVERTY.

II.—SOCIAL EDINBURGH.

CRIME AND DRINK, AND POVERTY.

CONSIDER now the facts as regards drink and crime. Unfortunately, the relation between these two is so close that convenience in treatment demands their being bracketed together.

The report of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland year after year refers to this intimate connection and its increasing gravity. In their report for 1902 they say — “As we have often pointed out, the crime and offences which fill the bulk of the prison registers are those more or less closely associated with excessive drinking. These crimes (breach of the peace, drunkenness, and obscenity), which are almost invariably associated with drunkenness, so deeply affect family life and the social wellbeing of the community that the increased frequency of their occurrence must be viewed with anxiety.” The Judicial Statistics for Scotland contain the same sad testimony. In the introduction to the Statistics for 1898 the compilers state that “one cannot avoid remarking the occurrence of an increase both in crime and drunkenness with the increase of the population.” And in their report for 1901 they say — “An examination, however hurried, of the tables which make up the criminal statistics for the year 1901 will show that the rapid increase in crime and disorder which began

Official
Testimony.

in 1897 has continued and has as yet received no check."

Crimes and
Offences,

The number of summary offences in the County of the City of Edinburgh for the year 1901 was 12,806, or an increase of 688 in three years. Since then there has been an annual decrease, the number of crimes and offences for the year 1903 being 11,212, but the total number is still considerably in excess of that for 1896. The number of crimes per 10,000 of the population was 342.4. Taking drunkenness only and crimes classed with it, Greenock, Govan, and Glasgow alone among Scotch towns showed a worse record in 1902 than Edinburgh, and a sad feature as regards Edinburgh is that, while in 1902 it was fourth worst, in 1889 it was only sixth worst, Glasgow, Greenock, Paisley, Govan, and Leith showing a larger proportion of crime. Edinburgh has lost its place, not by increased sobriety in Leith and Paisley, but by a greater rate of increase of drunkenness in Edinburgh. This is all the more lamentable as the evidence shows that the City is growing not more criminal but more intemperate. For, while crime due to drink has been steadily increasing, serious crime has been decreasing. A period of several years should be taken in order to measure this tendency. For the five years ending 1896, the average number of serious crimes in the County of Edinburgh (including the City) was 247, while for the following five years ending 1901 the average was only 178. The Chief Constable's report for year 1903 shows "crime" to be steadily increasing, but

he explains that minor assaults formerly included under "offences" are now included under "crime."

Before passing from this point, attention has to be drawn to the abnormal number of licences in the City, especially in the overcrowded districts. There are in Edinburgh 767 licences for the sale of exciseable liquors, or one for every 426 persons. If the limit suggested by Lord Peel were applied, there would be an immediate reduction of 345. The Church does not speak with a very certain voice on this subject, probably because its hands are tied. It contains too many members who take toll at the gilded gates, or, at all events, too many of such members are permitted, in virtue of large contributions, to exercise undue influence in ecclesiastical Courts, and ministers too often prefer to be silent rather than incur the risk of withdrawal from their congregations of wealthy members and the consequent diminution of Church finances. A selection from the share lists of distilling and brewing companies (which are open to public inspection) might form not unwholesome reading. Men have a right to press this point on the Church. Either the public-house in our crowded towns is building up, or it is destroying, the Kingdom which professedly it is the aim of the Church to advance. The influence of the public-house cannot be negative nor non-moral. It is a moral factor, and as such must be dealt with.

The criminal population is rapidly increasing, and what can be hoped for after the hall-mark of the Police Court has been stamped on a man? The

Public-Houses.

Criminal Population.

number of different individuals arrested during the year 1903 was 7287—an increase of 49 on the preceding year, and this in spite of a decrease in the total number of apprehensions. Of these over 5500 were arrested for the first time, over 1300 having been arrested more than once during the year. These facts tend to give an uncomfortable feeling as to the size of the criminal population. A slight calculation would indicate that in the course of a generation (say, twenty-five years) the number of convicted criminals in the community, after allowing for removals by death, might mount up to something like 50,000. This is a figure which cannot of course be stated with any certainty, but the situation is one that on reflection must cause grave concern.

Juvenile
Crime.

The growth of a criminal class is illustrated by the rise of hooliganism and the large increase in juvenile crime. The Chief Constable's annual report gives some painful statistics as to juvenile crime. Besides the offenders included in the foregoing figures, 759 lads and girls were cautioned by the Chief Constable in 1903 under the discretion wisely conferred upon him. The *Evening News* of 31st December, 1903, stated—"So far as can be gathered, there does not seem to be the least diminution in juvenile crime in the City. There has been a steady stream of such offenders at the Police Court, and it is usually a troublesome matter for the magistrate to know how to deal with them." That's the rub! What is the remedy? To find the remedy the cause must be understood.

Wise folk at their comfortable firesides shake their heads and deplore the growing lack of parental control and home influences. Think of the homes in many cases! The very use of the word does violence to the English language. Given four or five people to a room, with a dull, grey, monotonous and laborious day and no means of healthy recreation, are the heads of the house likely to turn out model parents? The only fulness which such a life usually knows is the fulness of the public-house. Others, with a philosophic flavour in the speech, inquire whether as a people we are not cultivating a more criminal instinct. A little reflection will show that the explanation does not lie in that direction, for serious crime is on the decrease—serious crime being understood to mean the more flagrant cases against person and property, forgery, and such like. It is sometimes urged that the increase in crime is due to the increased police supervision and the multiplication of statutory offences. But the Prison Commissioners do not find that this affords a proper explanation. The real cause of this moral ulcer is the conditions under which multitudes are compelled to live. The Commissioners, referring to prisoners, say—"Many, nay, most of them have never had a chance of doing well." It is not merely drunkenness and crime that we are called upon to face. These are in great measure results, and at the very outset the utter uselessness of expecting improvement under existing conditions must be recognised. The social machine goes on remorselessly with an ever-increasing output of human

The root of the matter.

wreckage. How can the children, except by a miracle, help being the finished product of the slums? With stolid lives and empty stomachs crime is easy, especially if there is the chance of a bellyful thereby. Hundreds of children attend the Board Schools who never get a square meal. The School Board has realised the futility of endeavouring to instil knowledge into starvelings. The headmaster of North Canongate Public School stated at a public meeting held some months ago that "during the past winter 457 children at the school of which he was in charge got a free dinner daily, because their parents were too poor to pay for a dinner. On one occasion 70 children came to school barefooted when the snow was on the ground. Hundreds of others had boots that did not keep out the wet, and clothes which did not keep out the cold."

Poverty.

This brings up the subject of Poverty, which falls next to be considered briefly. It almost necessarily follows from the housing conditions, and the growth of drunkenness and crime associated with them, that there must be in the community a very large amount of poverty. The extent of pauperism is hardly a proper index of that poverty. There are about 6000 paupers in the city, and about 4000 admissions to the poorhouse annually, including about 400 children. The figures with regard to poverty are considerably augmented by factors which do not come within the scope of Poor Law returns.

Various estimates of the degree of poverty through the country have been made. Every one is familiar with General Booth's "submerged tenth." Mr. Charles Booth, after exhaustive and laborious inquiry, has estimated that in London one and a quarter millions have not enough for the bare necessities of life. In the town of York, Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree has scientifically ascertained that about one-fourth of the whole population live below the poverty line. These estimates may be taken as approximately correct, and may serve as a basis for estimating the amount of poverty in large centres of population.

There is no reason to suppose that poverty does not obtain perennially in Edinburgh; but to put an estimate beyond question, it may be assumed that at least 20 per cent. of the population, or over 60,000 persons in Edinburgh in the year 1904 are insufficiently clothed and fed, and at the best are worse off than paupers. This proportion is considerably lower than that for London or York. The "poverty line" in the estimates given may be taken as meaning an income of 21s. per week per family of five—a moderately sized family of father, mother, and three children. Of course, a smaller family with £1 a week would be above the poverty line, while a larger one with 25s. per week would be beneath it. Take a family of five persons earning £1 per week. Deducting 5s. per week for rent and taxes (£13 per annum) there remains 15s., or 3s. per head for food, clothing, boots, and light. Out of any savings doctors' bills, holidays, sickness, and

little luxuries must be met. Probably it would tax the ingenuity of a Chancellor of the Exchequer to lay anything by for a rainy day. Then, households earning £1 per week or less are not on that account sober families, and, it may be, the head of the house, and perhaps his wife, are found in the company of those who swell the drink bill of Scotland to £3 5s. 2d. per head. Sometimes, also, even a poor man likes "a bit baccy"!

But supposing that the 60,000 persons referred to spend every farthing of their 3s. per week in mere maintenance, or in the attempt at it—a supposition which somewhat strains credulity—let us see how they would fare as compared with the paupers in our poorhouses. In Craiglockhart the weekly charge per pauper for maintenance alone is 3s. 5d.; in Craighleith it is 3s. 7d. The Edinburgh pauper is thus better off than 60,000 of his brothers and sisters in the same city who live in their own hired houses. This cannot but mean physical deterioration of the community, an increased rate of mortality, especially among the young, in the classes concerned, and a direct incentive to drink and crime. Mr. Seebohm Rowntree says that "the wages of unskilled labourers in towns are inadequate for the maintenance of a family of even moderate size." Of course, an increase of wages alone will not suffice. Wages must be well spent. But we have the authority of Becky Sharp for the doctrine that it is easier to be virtuous on £1000 a year than on nothing. A sad feature of the poverty of our land is that a much larger proportion of it than is

generally supposed is due to causes over which the unfortunate victims have no control.

Poverty drives a man to drink. It drives a woman ^{The sin of the city.} to drink and sometimes to worse. The Chief Constable states in his report for 1903 that with regard to drunkenness it is found that females account for quite 36 per cent. of the total. A dark spot on the city's life must be alluded to. There is a large and growing class of those who minister to the sin of the city. About 130 cases of prostitution are dealt with in the Police Courts annually, while the number of prostitutes known to the police number several hundreds. Many virtuous, comfortable and contented citizens who look with pride on an innocent family of boys and girls are all unconscious, perhaps happily, of the pestilence that walketh in the night in their beautiful streets. Let them but walk along the principal streets any Saturday night within an hour of midnight, and they will hear with their ears and see with their eyes sounds and sights that might well make them tremble for their sons and daughters. Let some of our ministers, oppressed with the thought of having nothing new to say, after finishing their sermons for Sunday, take such a walk with Christ-opened ears and eyes, and then see whether on the Sunday their preaching do not throb with life and their prayers come with a bloody sweat.

Another moral and social pulse is mental disease. ^{Mental Diseases.} In his last report, Dr. Clouston, Physician Superintendent of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum for the

Insane, states that, "when every person afflicted with mental disease or weakness of mind in any and every marked form was accounted for, they had a proportion of 1 to 230 of the population of Edinburgh." The number of insane persons chargeable to the rates is steadily increasing—from 1 in every 413 of the population in 1873 to 1 in every 315 in 1903. A very large number of cases were "suffering from general paralysis, the most fatal of all forms of brain and mental disease, and the number of alcoholics was excessive to a degree unprecedented in the Asylum's history." And Dr. Clouston adds—"Whatever may be the explanation, it was a social scandal of a very alarming kind that nearly one-half of the insanity of men of any district should be more or less due to drink."

The three outstanding facts about the insanity of the city are (1) its rapid growth; (2) the large proportion among the poor; and (3) the marked increase in the number of alcoholics. When the expert best entitled to speak on the subject describes the position as "*a social scandal of a very alarming kind*," surely it is not outwith the province of the Churches to devote some little attention to insanity in respect of its causes, as forming a factor in the moral condition of the people.

RECREATION AND SPORT.

Another element affecting the social condition of the people is the matter of recreation and sport. The present inquiry, however, does not demand any lengthened treatment of this subject, and so far as

it affects the problem under discussion, it will be briefly referred to in a later Paper.

Summarising the facts of one or two aspects of the social condition of the people of Edinburgh, which may be taken as more or less indicative in its main features of the social condition of other cities—there being no intention to cast a slur on its fair fame—we find that the population grows at the rate of about twenty per cent. every ten years, that apparently there is more than the average number of well-to-do, and a strong caste feeling. One-third of the population live more than two persons to a room, and over 67,000 three or more to a room. Drink, poverty, and crime accompany overcrowding, each of the four reacting on the others. The Prison Commissioners state that the frequency of the crimes associated with drunkenness “must be viewed with anxiety.” The number of crimes per 10,000 of the population averages about 340 annually and the proportion is growing. Public-houses are most numerous in the most crowded districts. Juvenile crime is on the increase. Poverty is widespread. Thousands of men, women, and children are underfed. Over 60,000 persons in Edinburgh are housed, clothed, and fed, if not worse, at least not better, than paupers. Prostitution and lunacy are increasing. Such is the dark side to the life of the city, and the fact must be emphasised that to one-third of the population it is dark, to many of them black as midnight. It takes strong and heroic men and

women to keep faith, courage, and character under such conditions, and at the best life is dull and grey. The picture is not overdrawn. Indeed, it is not a picture, but hard, ghastly fact.

What are the Churches doing to brighten the outlook? The Church is called to minister "life" to these people. Life must come out of death, the death to all but duty of the men who give it, and the death of every factor that makes life impossible. Has the Church a remedy for the healing of the sores of the people ; or is it to become stereotyped as a mere agency for the provision of religious services for the benefit of the comfortable classes?

III.—RELIGIOUS EDINBURGH.
RELIGIOUS AGENCIES AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION.

III.—RELIGIOUS EDINBURGH.

I. RELIGIOUS AGENCIES.

IN discussing the religious life of Edinburgh it is proposed to deal only with the Protestant communion. By confining the survey to the Protestant Churches the discussion will be simplified, and all such churches—Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, and Episcopal—will be dealt with together as presumably having certain common beliefs and aims. This, of course, implies no offence to the Roman Catholic Church in Edinburgh, which is more or less an alien Church; but it is not proposed to discuss here the question of its influence for good or evil on the life of the community, further than to say that the good work of many of its clergy amongst the poorest of the people should not go unacknowledged.

Omitting what may, without intention of disrespect, be called odds and ends of sects in the city, there are in all 164 churches distributed thus:—

Church of Scotland,	...	...	...	46
United Free Church,	...	...	...	72
Free Church of Scotland,	...	...	...	2
Episcopal (English and Scotch),	...	...	...	19
Congregational and Evangelical Union,	...	...	...	10
Baptist,	...	...	...	7
Methodist (Wesleyan and Primitive),	...	...	...	4
Seceders (United and Original),	...	...	...	4

164

This gives one place of worship to every 1884

persons in Edinburgh. It has been laid down that every person present in church on any Sunday represents two other persons having church connection, so that, on the assumption that all the community had a taste for church-going, the average attendance for all the churches should amount to about 628, including men, women, and children. But it may safely be assumed that the average attendance at public worship in Edinburgh does not approach that figure. Apart from that, it is quite clear that the number of churches is more than ample. The Rev. Dugald Butler took occasion at a recent meeting to refer to the state of matters in his parish (the Tron), to which he said benefit would accrue if they annihilated half the churches, and established a great redemptive settlement in the neighbourhood. It has been suggested that the number of churches is at least unwarranted by the numbers attending them, and in order to illustrate this it may be useful to endeavour to find out what proportion of the population have avowed church connection.

Membership. The membership claimed by the principal denominations is in round figures—

Church of Scotland,	43,000
United Free Church,	45,000
Estimated for other Protestant denomi- nations,	12,000
Giving a total of, say, ...	100,000

It is well known that church membership statistics are usually overstated, but the figures given are accepted for present purposes.

The number of persons in the city over sixteen years of age is 224,533. The percentage of persons over sixteen years of age who are church members is about 44. After allowing for *adherents*, and for Roman Catholics, we are left to conclude that at least one-third of the population over sixteen are absolutely without church connection. There has been no census of church attendance in Edinburgh, but the results obtained where censuses have been taken would suggest that the above estimate is well within the mark ; and certainly, with one-third of the population living under such housing conditions and one-fifth to whom "Sabbath clothes" must be an unknown quantity, a better result is hardly to be expected.

It may be taken as quite established not only that there are too many churches, but that the churches ^{Are the Churches effective?} which exist do not get at the mass of the people. In Edinburgh there are two Churches which claim to be national—the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church—and men have a right to ask them what they are doing to justify their claim. The onus is upon them to deal with the situation, and there is, happily, some indication that the Church of Scotland at least is beginning to waken up. Some time ago it appointed a committee to make inquiries to enable the Church to decide whether it should take steps to enter upon such new social efforts as to them might seem necessary or desirable. The remit was somewhat timid, but the committee faced the subject in a braver spirit. The results of inquiry probably startled them into action. Contact with facts is an excellent dynamic. It may be pointed out, however,

that what the committee appears to aim at is mere alleviation of results rather than removal of causes. The remedy does not appear to touch the root of the disease, and so can only be at the best partially successful. Perhaps, however, it is too early and somewhat ungenerous even to seem to disparage a well-meant effort to deal with a difficult problem.

The Church of Scotland and the United Free Church have 118 congregations in the city, which gives one place of worship to every 2680 of the population. The observation is still true that the machinery is extensive enough for the work, and if that machinery is not effecting its object of bringing to bear the best moral and religious influences on the whole life of the community, the failure must be due, not to lack of resources, but to want of wise use and arrangement of resources. Dr. Watson, of Liverpool, says—"It is not a question as to whether we ought to have more men and more buildings and more funds, but as to whether we cannot use the men and the buildings and the funds to a better purpose, and whether, if we were organised like a great public service or like an able business enterprise, we should not be able so to use them." It seems strange that in the twentieth century, in which men live strenuous lives under new and untoward social conditions, herded into great towns, beset on every hand with the greatest temptations, the Church should be content to meander along in the manner that suited our grandfathers, and to work in the ruts of two centuries. In the region of dogma the Churches are crying to be delivered from the rusty

fetters of a hard Confession. Now that in the case of the United Free Church the House of Lords has given them a Charter of Emancipation—if so they choose to take it—will they, with freedom in this realm, rise to a similar liberty in the matter of organisation and service? If the failure of existing congregational organisations to reach the masses is not sufficiently proved by the above figures, it is beginning to be acknowledged by the Churches themselves, and various remedies are attempted. The existence of the Salvation Army is a reflection on the Churches, and a witness to neglected work. Then there are independent missions managed by Churchmen, congregational missions, city missionaries, and Biblewomen, all intended to supplement the ordinary work of the Church. To the ordinary mind it seems odd, to say the least, that congregations should consider it sufficient to attack the complicated problem of the lapsed by the agency of a missionary hired for £1 to £2 per week, while, for conducting their own comfortable religious exercises, they employ the best talent they can get, at £1, £2, and even £3 per day. It is not desired in any way to minimise missions, but it is desired to point out how inadequately they deal with the work which the Church fails to do.

Among the independent missions in the city are ^{Missions.} Carrubbers' Close Mission, the City Mission, and the Sabbath Morning Free Breakfast Mission. These, and others, conducted by earnest people individually connected with the Churches, all do a good work, but what are they among one-third of the population? Those responsible for them

would doubtless be the first to own that they touch but a fringe of the problem. It is difficult to ascertain exactly the number of Congregational missions; but it is "the correct thing" for a Church nowadays to have a mission—a sort of detached organisation in a poor locality. They jostle each other, and range in character from the model of what a mission should be to the sickly affair whose only work is to afford occasion for ridicule. Many worthy people seem to forget the significance of the phrase Home Mission. They degrade it into the pestering of those far down in the social scale who have not enough moral, mental, or even physical stamina left to resent it.

The city Missionaries and Biblewomen, as given in the Post Office Directory, number about 59 and 33 respectively. This is calculated to give an erroneous impression, as the list includes, in addition to missionaries connected with the City Mission, missionaries supplied by congregations or special associations. Many of these so-called missionaries are really Assistant Pastors, a number of them being College fledglings. The United Free Church is responsible for 37 of these, the Established Church for 7. The City Mission and other organisations have 15 agents, some being specially appointed to work among special classes. These agencies are referred to because they are set up for the express purpose of dealing with the masses, and their existence is a tacit admission of the fact that the Churches, through the ordinary channels of congregational life, are not going to the people and dealing directly with the situation. These efforts

are not the efforts of the Churches, but a sort of delegation of the work to subsidiary and outside agencies. Mission work is limited to special classes, the fact that non-church-going is prevalent among all classes being practically ignored.

If the Churches are failing through the time-honoured orthodox means to realise the aim of Christianity that "Thy will be done on earth," are the auxiliary methods attaining that result? That question has only to be asked to be immediately answered by a survey of our social conditions. Are the Churches then prepared to review the situation and adapt their resources to meeting it? If the situation is to be adequately dealt with, the *sources of evil* must be seriously grappled with. The Rev. F. B. Meyer, President of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches in England, in his presidential address this year, asked—"How could we deal effectively with the evils of drunkenness, iniquity, gambling, and overcrowding, and with the evils of shameful monopoly, if we alleviated only individual cases and forbore to touch the dark and putrid sources of these polluted streams?" If the Church is to be the conservator of the moral and religious life of the people, it must face the question of how these evils are to be dealt with.

There is an element of frivolity in a tone of state-^{Excuses.}ment adopted by certain Church folk. They declare off-hand that these questions are political, and that they fall only within the scope of legislative action. These are dangerous half-truths. The questions are political in the sense that Christian legislation might

do much to amend existing conditions. But even supposing that contention to be entirely right, the blame lies none the less at the door of the Churches, for, if the men at the helm of State are not men with a strong Christian sympathy, seeking to do all that legislation could do, are the Churches in no way answerable? Do the messages delivered from four thousand pulpits Sunday by Sunday do nothing to fire the electorate in the pew with Christian views of public life and duty?

Again, it is said that the people are alienated from the Churches, not the Churches from the people. Surely this is a strange argument to come from the accredited representatives of a religion whose Founder came to earth expressly to seek and to save that which was lost. Be it as they say, it is then their bounden duty to go out into the highways and to compel the people to come in. There is no getting over the fact that Christianity firmly insists on throwing on its adherents the onus of seeking, and whether it be that the people are alienated from the Churches or the Churches from the people, the command to seek is still insistent. It is contended here that the Church has the poorest buildings, the less virile men (there are many good men and women worthy of all honour, but the general statement is true), and its weakest and least effective and most effete organisations among the masses. In order more clearly to see this ineffectiveness of the Churches as at present organised, some consideration will require to be given to the distribution of agencies, and the connection between social status and the Churches.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS AGENCIES.

There is a close connection between the social and the religious geography of Edinburgh. The social geography can be fairly well defined. Edinburgh, like Gaul, may be divided into three parts, "The West End," "The South Side," and "The Old Town." The West End will be found north and west of a line drawn from the General Post Office to Murrayfield. The South Side includes Merchiston, Morningside, and Newington districts—the quarters of the bulk of the middle and lower middle classes. The working-class districts are wedged in between the West End and the South Side. Stockbridge, Leith Walk, Broughton, and Abbeyhill districts also contain large working-class communities.

For convenience in dealing with figures it is proposed to take the city according to wards—the dominant character of each ward determining its class. The West End comprises Haymarket, St. Andrew's, and St. Bernard's wards, with an aggregate population of about 43,000. The South Side, comprising Newington, Morningside, and Merchiston wards, has a population of about 59,000. The remaining wards have chiefly a working-class population, numbering about 213,000. Now, the provision of churches is shown by the following table :—

Locality.	Population.	No. of Churches.	No. of Persons to each Church.
West End, ...	43,000	28	1535
South Side, ...	59,000	32	1842
Working-class districts, ...	213,000	104	2048

The facts
about over-
churching.

This at once disproves the generally accepted statement that the crowded parts of the town are over-churched as compared with other districts, and shows that the amount of attention by the Churches is in inverse ratio to the squalid and crowded character of a locality. This is not an over-statement. In the most crowded parts of the city—Dalry, St. Giles, George Square, St. Leonard's, Canongate, and Calton wards, there are eighty churches, or one to every 1900 inhabitants. Excluding St. Giles, the proportion is one for every 2633. In St. Leonard's there are nine churches for 26,452, or one for every 2939 persons. Canongate is nearly as bad, having only ten churches (and five of these *east* of Holyrood) for a population of 24,339, or one for every 2432 persons. Dalry ward has only one church for every 5723 persons. Nor is there in the immediately adjoining districts any counterbalancing disproportion.

The only ward in the Old Town showing a low proportion of population to churches as compared with the wealthier districts of the city is St. Giles', which has one church for about every 900 of the *resident* population; but it should be pointed out that these churches include St. John the Evangelist (Princes Street), St. Giles', St. Cuthbert's, The Tron, United Free High, Augustine Church, and one or two churches of small denominations, all of which presumably draw the larger part of their congregations from outside the ward. To verify this presumption, take the membership of the whole of the Old Town churches. Fifty-nine churches

show per Blue Books a membership of about 40,000 for a population of 104,000 persons—men, women, and children, including Roman Catholics—that is to say, two persons out of every five are Church members, while the proportion of membership for the whole city is actually less than that, leaving out of consideration all persons under sixteen years of age. This throws a curious light on the situation. One of three things would seem to be true—(1) The figures lie ; (2) The members are not parochial ; or (3) A large proportion of the members make queer citizens. The fact is, that the truth is not altogether in any one of these statements. It may be presumed that the Blue Books are not infallible, and it may further be presumed that only a mere fraction of the worshippers are natives. If this is not the case, the Church is a poor uplifting agency, and turns out a miserable moral product. The largest churches in the heart of the city are really appropriated to the well-to-do, who have already secured so much attention in their own localities, making the disparity of treatment so much the more glaring. The Church worships *among* the common people, but not *with* them nor they with her. If this contention is admitted, it may be asked once again—Are the methods of the Church effete? If they are, will she recognise facts and waken up?

Summarising, we find that there are more than enough churches in Edinburgh, supplemented by numerous missions. The churches do not touch the sources of social evils ; they are unequally

distributed among the community, in inverse ratio to the poverty of the various classes ; they do not reach and, as at present worked, are not likely to reach in any way at least one-third of the population.

Church
Transference.

Some little attention must be given to the subject of church transference. Notwithstanding the position already shown that the better class districts are best provided with churches, and that the wealthy appropriate the large churches in the heart of the city, transplanting has invariably taken place from poorer districts to richer ones. It seems as if it were axiomatic in this connection that "to him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The only ward in Edinburgh having a decreasing population is St. Andrew's. The population of the Old Town is actually increasing. The churches move away, not because of decrease in the population of the locality, but because of failure. They surrender the field before the advance of poverty and drink. Church transplanting is altogether along wrong lines. By all means snuff out useless and antiquated machinery, but put in new and up-to-date substitutes. Owing to its legal position the Church of Scotland finds congregational transference a much more difficult matter than their dissenting brethren. But they sin no worse when they can. The proposed transference of St. Luke's to Prestonfield is a case in point. Dr. Cameron Lees' protest will be re-echoed in many quarters. "Endowments given for the

poor should be kept for the use of the poor." "He would not be a party," he said, "to the taking away of endowments from the poor and sending it to a district of that kind." In the bodies comprising the United Free Church, a steady movement has been going on for winding up or removing churches whose decay, financially and numerically, becomes a reproach, from the crowded areas where they have lost ground to young and vigorous suburbs.

The suburban churches grow stronger, at least materially, while city congregations crumble away. It has been shown that a good case cannot be made for transplanting on account of decreasing population, or over-churching, as compared with other districts. Positions are surrendered because they have collapsed, and the old place is almost invariably abandoned.

At last year's autumn meetings of the English Congregational Union, an object-lesson on this policy of folly was presented to the Churches. The Rev. Bertram Smith described an experiment made by himself and Mr. Francis Wrigley. These young men, on the eve of leaving college a few years ago, heard of the intention to close a church in a poor district of Leeds, the membership having dwindled down almost to nothing. They agreed together not to marry for a certain number of years, to step into the breach, to live among the people, and to stipulate for no salary, but to be content with enough for decent subsistence. The effect

An Object-Lesson.

was extraordinary. The people soon rallied around the men who so fully became as themselves. Referring to a sneer at slum Gospel preaching, Mr. Smith said—"I for one would not be ashamed to go into the darkest slum with a lantern upon which the words 'God is Love' were inscribed. But, mind you, I should be ashamed to do that if I were not at the same time doing all that I could to make that slum impossible."

Here are the essentials of success. Suitable men in earnest, identifying themselves with and sacrificing themselves for the people, and striving with might and main to grapple with all that militates against the moral and social welfare of the people. These young men have demonstrated that the problem can be met and solved.

Instances can be found nearer home, and as some hard things have had to be spoken about the United Free Church, the first example will be cited from that community. In Fountainbridge a congregation growing slowly smaller and composed almost entirely of non-residents was transferred to a suburban district where it is as undistinguishable from its old self as a butterfly from the chrysalis. The old building was put under the charge of a young minister (the Rev. H. M. Ross), apparently well fitted for his post, who lives among the people, and the success of the movement has been so encouraging that the Presbytery and the press have both taken notice of it. The work carried on so energetically under the Rev. George Jackson at the Wesleyan Methodist "Central Hall" supplies another instance.

At "the men's meeting" 600 to 800 men may be found every Sunday afternoon during the winter months listening to addresses on all aspects of Christianity from the best men of the day. One or two other examples might be mentioned where ministers, alive to facts and circumstances, are building up, or maintaining, large congregations in working-class districts. These cases are sufficient to indicate the success of fresh methods among working people. In each case the social conditions are recognised and, to some extent at least, faced. The results are worth pondering. And as to what might be, if Church leaders so cared, this might form the not unprofitable subject of holiday day-dreams.

IV.—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

IV.—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

THERE are many factors in the problem facing the Churches of how to lay hold on the working-man. Some are internal and others are external. The external influences may be summed up under one or two heads. The hard conditions of modern life in large cities, and its dull grey monotonousness ; the tendency of working-men to fight shy of a black coat ; the inadequate housing of the industrial and poorer classes ; the crowding of public-houses in poor neighbourhoods and the spread of drunkenness and consequent poverty. Decent material conditions mean so much to multitudes of men that religion does not appeal to them unless coupled with manly effort to bring the sores of civilisation to an end. Slumming counts for nothing unless there goes with it a mighty endeavour to make the slums impossible.

An element that cannot be overlooked is the Sport, &c. abnormal craze for sport and the extraordinary increase in drinking habits, which constitute a grave danger to all the best interests of working-men and threaten the very basis of Society. If some working-men put as much energy into an effort to improve their own circumstances and the lot of their fellows as they put into football, horse-racing, betting, and gambling, they would soon solve many of the problems

affecting their welfare. The indifference of working-men to fighting stubbornly their own battles is becoming a matter of serious concern to many of their wisest and best friends. But "Heaven helps those who help themselves" is not quite a New Testament maxim, and an exact allocation of the amount of blame attaching to the masses for their own condition will not solve the problem, so far as the Church is concerned. To the extent to which these external influences militating against the social and moral welfare of the community can be righted by Christian men, it is their bounden duty to be ceaseless in effort to have things bettered.

Strained Relations and their causes.

The peculiarly strained relations of the Church and labour must be honestly faced. And not only the facts, but misunderstanding of fact must be considered. False views must be dispelled, prejudices removed, and ill-will conciliated, not by dialectical discussions but by action. The first point that occurs to one, on a consideration of the internal influences operating towards estrangement, is, that the working-man identifies the Church with the minister. A fierce light beats on the clergy, and their faults, real or supposed, are laid at the door of the Church. There is no use crying aloud at the want of justice in this method. There it is and it must be reckoned with.

What the People think about.

The ministry give the people credit for thinking, and they are right, but they mistake the line of the people's thoughts. The pulpit gives much time to mental and theological problems. Within limits this is, of course, legitimate, but not all men are

qualified to deal with these, and, besides, popular thought does not run mainly along these lines. The truth or falsehood of Christianity is not, amongst the mass of Scotch people, the burning question that many ministers suppose it to be. Christianity may be false or true, but, assuming it to be true, the world looks for its profession to be accompanied by its practice. The Gospel contains the principles and impulses of several social and moral revolutions, and the steady insistence of these principles would slowly change the face of society. The generality of men are much more concerned about the moral and social side of religion than the mental side. The dominant cry to-day is—

“There may be Heaven, there may be Hell,
Meantime there is our Earth here”;

and the note of despair has been struck so deep in some souls that they think only about the hell upon earth.

In their hours of thought working-men puzzle over this, and if a minister would but disguise himself and mix with serious-minded working-men, he would obtain some startling glimpses of what they think about. *He* is one of the problems they study. They think Jesus Christ the King of working-men. But what puzzles them is how from the stable at Bethlehem and the carpenter's shop at Nazareth there has grown up an ecclesiastical system so far alienated from the life of the people. In His own day the common people heard Him gladly, and there is no reason to suppose they would not do so to-day. The reason is easy to find. His life was one of insistent

and strenuous altruism. Men expect, rightly or wrongly, that the ministry should be the incarnate representation in their own generation of the power of that endless life. The masses see in the minister one who claims to have been called by Jesus Christ to be a special representative of His among men, and naturally they look not for the sign of the Cross but for the Cross itself. With the utmost relentlessness they lay the life of the Master and the disciple side by side, and weigh them with cruel exactness. And they are puzzled, because, after making allowance for frail humanity, they note some grave discrepancies. They see the failure of the minister to identify himself with the life of the people, to dwell among them, or be one of themselves. It is difficult to convince a man in the Pleasance that a minister living, say, in the Grange knows his joys and sorrows and is able to share them. The situation, at all events, gives rise to doubt. The masses know at least this of Christ, that His characteristic attitude was "in the midst," and they feel that this abiding apart of the minister means fewer points of contact, and is a departure from the true spirit of Christianity.

Failure in
Ministerial
Training.

It must be conceded that there is much truth in their severe logic. The Church even is beginning to see the force of it. In December last, speaking at a meeting of Edinburgh United Free Presbytery in support of a motion recommending a revisal of the system of training students, Professor A. R. MacEwen said—"The course through which he (a student) has passed has been defective. It has tended to develop the scholastic and critical as

distinguished from the practical and evangelical." At the Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, in November last, "Dr. Watt, of Anderston, raised a discussion regarding questions which had been put by a Congregational Vacancy Committee to candidates. The questions related to the views of the candidates on ritualism, total abstinence, congregational visitation, and an effort was made to ascertain whether the candidates would be willing to reside within a convenient distance of the church, and to encourage the auxiliaries of the church. Dr. Watt said he strongly objected to such procedure. A bargain, or at least an understanding, between the Vacancy Committee and the candidates in question tended to make the minister, whoever he might be, the slave of the congregation instead of what he ought to be—the leader. He moved that the matter be remitted to the Law Committee to obtain the law and practice of the Church on such methods of procedure, and this the Presbytery ultimately agreed to do." With deference to Dr. Watt, the Vacancy Committee in question may be presumed to have known its business as well as the Presbytery. At all events, the questions of the Committee show what the people want, and if the Church is stupid enough to run its head against a stone wall, its belief in miracles will not avert the natural consequence.

Another great obstacle in the way of bringing the Church and the people together is the democratic spirit of the age, and the utter failure of the Church to come abreast of it. The gulf is seen at its widest

Methods of government.

in the methods of government held to so tenaciously by the Church. Ministers dominate its councils much as in the sixteenth century, and naturally the mind of the people is affected by the ideals of the twentieth century. It is necessary that ministers should confer as to the progress of their work and devise plans for furthering and extending it. But why should they insist on carrying the administrative burden? It is not scriptural nor common sense, its moral effect on them is not good, and the spectacle of it does not help to place them any more in the confidence of the public. This abuse affects not only the higher courts of the Church, but also the government of congregations. In the Presbyterian Churches, at least, provision is made for a form of representative congregational government. In too many cases it is a form and nothing more. An unscrupulous minister (unfortunately the terms are not in fact contradictory) will, without any fear of intervention of his Presbytery, easily find means of securing his own ends in local court or session by flattering vain men, capturing weak men, ignoring simple men, and getting rid of independent men. Whether the end gained is worth the loss involved to the Church at large Church leaders had better begin to take into consideration.

Matters, however, are worse than is implied in the exercise of mere administrative work. In the higher courts a certain emphasis is given to phases of it, indicating a bent of interest and policy. Consider for a moment the order of business in Presbytery or Synod. In the Church by law

established "Church Interests," or the loaves and fishes of a State connection, come first ; in the United Free Church the Sustentation and Augmentation Funds dominate all else. The United Church, which might reasonably be supposed to weed out useless agencies and strengthen weak ones, and to deal mighty blows to moral evils in the community, has, up till within very recent weeks, been giving the strength of its Church Courts to an amalgamation scheme of the two great "central" funds for the support of the ministry. These things require attention, but there is something suggestive of indecency in the sight of ministers giving up so much time to them. When the directors of a bank meet, they closely overhaul the condition of the various branches, and do not for ever worry about their remuneration. They take for granted that if they do their duty by the shareholders the shareholders will do as much or more by them.

If the financial position of the clergy were critical, there might be some excuse for all this straining after the good things of this world. The case is quite otherwise. The founders of Christianity were not better off than the people among whom they lived. In Edinburgh the living of the Established Church clergy averages £445, and there are in many cases augmentations and free manses, while the share of worldly gear coming to their brethren of the United Free Church averages about £400. Now, one-fifth of the population are as badly off—some worse off than paupers—and there are hundreds of men in business, teachers, and law,

Financial
Position of
the Clergy.

insurance, and bank clerks, and a considerable sprinkling of professional men whose incomes do not exceed one-half of these sums. These are the average men of the city, and it is not too hard to say that the *average* minister would be an average man in any other sphere. But he is as well off again as the average man.

Ineptitude and
inefficiency
covered up.

While the preponderance of the clerical element in the Church Courts does not help to make it popular in a democratic age, and the persistent prominence given to money matters is likely to alienate, there is another fact which more and more obtrudes itself on public view and perhaps is more than anything else responsible for distrust in the clergy. That is the unwholesome fear of fresh air on the scandals of ministerial ineptitude and inefficiency and arrogance, and the way in which mal-administration is hushed up. Dr. Watson, of Liverpool, put this admirably in an address delivered some months ago to the Westminster College Association, Cambridge (the report being taken from the *British Weekly* of 26th November, 1903). "Suppose," he said, "that the minister turns out, in spite of the judgment of the congregation, to be an unsuitable minister, because he has no reserve knowledge, or because he will not study, or because it is impossible to work with him, or because his wife embarrasses his relations with his people, or for some other out of a dozen reasons. The work of the congregation goes wrong, its numbers decrease, the finances fail, office-bearers resign and leave, the once-prosperous

field turns into a desert. This is not an unknown situation, or one which has not engaged the attention of Presbyteries. What then? Does he resign? Very likely not. Is he removed from the congregation by his Presbytery? Upon such grounds, almost certainly not. The Presbytery will see members departing, and even compel office-bearers to leave, but they will secure a minister in his position although it be amid the ruins of a congregation. If the Church has no power to secure for a pious and accomplished man a congregation, it has power to secure a foolish and useless man in his place after he has obtained a congregation. No bank would continue its representative in a town when he had scattered its clients, and the last thing a bank would dream of doing would be to show its leading customers to the door in order to protect the dignity of an impossible manager. Even the War Office has recalled generals who have failed, and would not tolerate one who had flung an army away."

It cannot be said that Dr. Watson is not acquainted with Presbyteries or that he does not know what he is speaking about. Probably there are few Presbyteries in which "the situation" is unknown. It is certainly well known in Edinburgh, and the sooner Presbyteries recognise the immorality of acting towards such a situation in the manner indicated by Dr. Watson the better will it be in their own interests and in the interests of religion and morals. One of its results is the lowering of the moral perceptions and fibre, not only of the minister directly concerned, but of all who passively acquiesce

in such a state of things or wilfully refuse to look into them. They only see in every attempt to shed daylight on irregularities or bring inefficiency to book, an attempt to encroach on ministerial privilege or to interfere with ministerial policy, and construe it into an attack on the Church. There is an inordinate amount of wire-pulling to hush up uncomfortable facts. Good men are perplexed at the amount of friction between ministers and office-bearers which the numerous complaints indicate. But they are silent; and, while the fullest inquiry would emancipate the Church from many an evil, the duty of inquiry is shunted, and too often it is undertaken, when undertaken at all, far too late in the day, only to discover that damage done by incompetency or self-will is irreparable.

Ministerial
ability at a
cash premium.

Still another fact that tells against successful work among the masses—and this is one that involves ministers and Church members alike—is that ministerial ability has a money value. It commands a heavy cash premium, and it is not the most needful locality that gets the great preacher and pastor, but the highest bidder, and, what is worse, the highest bidder keeps him. The great make-believe of Presbyterianism is that its ministers are the servants of the Church. This is almost an exploded theory. They are the servants (in so far as they are servants at all, for, if Dr. Watt of Anderston's words may be taken as indicative of general clerical opinion, the New Testament description of ministers, "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" is apparently now ruled out of date), they are the servants of the congregation

who can pay them best, with the result that the poorer districts are being practically starved of good men. The masses note this. As Dr. Robertson Nicoll says—"In proportion as Nonconformists recognise that their first duty is to the people, that their finest buildings and their best men should be at the service of the poor, in that proportion they will prosper. The disappointing results of the extension of the franchise are doubtless largely due to the manner in which for long years the Christian Church ignored the masses."

A more delicate matter must be touched. A growing doctrine of to-day is the right of every member of the community to be provided with opportunities of earning a livelihood. Circumstances are against this. But the people see how carefully ministers look after their own material interests. They secure inalienably for themselves and their widows and families at least a competent portion of the world's goods, with more or less social position. This is right enough; but what the masses do not think right is that some share of the same foresight and carefulness in things material is not bestowed on them, and they conclude that the Church is merely a rich and influential ecclesiastical system out of touch with the life of the people. This also is evidently coming to be recognised, for, in urging Perth Presbytery recently "to take certain definite methods to show their interest in questions affecting the welfare of the working classes, the Rev. J. H. Wells, Bridge of Earn, counselled less talk about ecclesiastical matters and more about social questions."

The Church
and human
needs.

In a sermon preached not long ago by the Rev. J. H. Jowett, of Birmingham, entitled "The Golden Age," the preacher drew attention to this subject, and surely the Churches might do worse than work a little towards the result foreshadowed in the following paragraph from that sermon:—"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree. That savours of Bourneville! Yes, and Bourneville is in the prophetic line, and has got something of the light and colour of the golden age. There is to be a distribution of comforts. Life's monotony is to be broken up. Sweet and winsome things are to be brought into the common life. Dyingness and want are both to be banished. There is to be a little beauty for everybody, something of the vine and the fig tree. There is to be a little ease for everybody, time to sit down and rest. To every mortal man there is to be given a little treasure, a little leisure, and a little pleasure."

The Church
and wealth.

One other point at which the Church and the masses part ways must be referred to—the attitude of the Churches to the wealthy. A single illustration will suffice. This is the age of "Carnegie" organs. It is not intended to utter one disrespectful word of a gentleman who is sincerely desirous of devoting his wealth to the furtherance of beneficent schemes. Mr. Carnegie is what he pretends to be, a millionaire philanthropist, a lover of good music and good literature, who gives freely to every applicant for a church organ or a free public library. What the Church is interested in is the money for the organs, and right liberally has she

helped herself. But the question may legitimately be asked, is it for her good? Organs are all right. But unfortunately this is not merely a question of pipes. In Lord Minto's view (a view shared by many silent members of the Churches), as lately expressed in a case where the minister had applied for and obtained the usual half grant, the process is a pauperising one. But there is a graver side to the matter. There is nothing that the people are more hostile to to-day than amassed wealth. Millions cannot easily be made on New Testament principles. But, apart from the question of the amount of capitalised labour in the millions, there is a far more serious question. The church organs come from the owner of the bulk of the First Gold Bonds of the United States Steel Corporation. This combination was incorporated in 1901, these Gold Bonds, amounting to \$304,000,000, being issued in exchange for bonds and shares of one of the companies taken over. There is about 1000 million dollars of Common and Preferred Stock and Second Bonds, and these stocks and bonds are largely held by the investing public. It is the old story of inflation of capital. The present position of the Steel Trust is well known—the prices in the beginning of August, 1904, of the stocks ranking after the First Gold Bonds being

Common Stock, - - -	12 per cent.
Preferred Stock, - - -	60 „ „
Second 5 per cent. Bonds, -	78 „ „

It will be seen that the loss to the investing public is enormous, but the First Gold Bonds from which, presumably, organ monies have come

have suffered no depreciation. The question is, have the Churches shared in the proceeds of the over-capitalisation? The suggestion may seem uncharitable, but a consideration of the facts would certainly appear to indicate that they are really sharers in the spoils of American Trusts. The working-man views the matter pretty much as he thinks of Mr. Sully and his corner in cotton, or of Mr. Morgan and his "Morganeering." If Christianity be true, every sovereign the Church can lay fingers on is not necessarily worth twenty shillings to her—some sovereigns mean a terrible price. The Church cannot be allied with money and the masses. The business looks suspiciously like trying to serve God and Mammon, which, a great Teacher once said, cannot be done. If He were here to-day, think you would He keep silence, or would He say, "The spoil of the poor is in your houses"?

The Church
and the Drink
Trade.

Another way of making money is by the manufacture of human wreckage, and the Church cheerfully accepts money so made. Recently the United Free Church accepted £10,000 as a donation to one of the central funds out of which the ministers' stipends are paid. The £10,000 was the gift of a brewer. With the brewer we have nothing to do, but about the acceptance of the £10,000 there is something to be said. The £10,000 represents a slice of the country's drink bill. The losses have been indicated in an earlier part of these papers. To Edinburgh the loss is a mass of wrecked humanity, lying, Lazarus-like, at the door of the Church. To the Church in this

instance the gain is £10,000. The Church takes the pieces of silver, and the devil takes at least as much out of the transaction.

To sum up on this head, the words of Dr. Watson to his own congregation on 3rd April, 1904, may appropriately be quoted. A report of the sermon says—"Dr. John Watson ('Ian Maclaren'), preaching at Sefton Park Church on Easter Sunday morning, touched upon the problem of the Church and the masses. Incidentally he wove in a bit of autobiography, intimating that if he had his life to plan out again he might not be found as the minister of a wealthy suburban church. He said the supreme reason why the masses are estranged from the Church is that the latter has failed to impress the people with the fact that she is the lineal descendant of the crucified Nazarene. They cannot detect the 'wounds' which are the signs of the Christ."

V.—THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC
QUESTIONS.

V.—THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

AMONG the defects and weaknesses which have loosened the influence of the Churches, their attitude towards public questions must be touched upon. The action of the Churches in Edinburgh in connection with ten o'clock closing seemed to indicate a partial waking-up. Will they, now that ten o'clock closing is assured for a time, fight the drink traffic as it will yet have to be fought? Let them not too hastily conclude that even this small measure of reform is permanently secured. There is, it is to be feared, a "yellow peril" at our own doors. With a determined foe, backed by gold, it is by no means certain that the battle of early closing will not have to be fought over again. Will the Churches follow up their recent show of interest and face loss in influential membership and in finance by an uncompromising attitude towards this whole question?

In this connection the Church has a character to redeem. The Rev. R. J. Campbell, speaking in the City Temple on 7th January, 1904, said, referring to the London public-house census—"It is hereby made plain to us in a particularly vivid manner the hold which drinking habits have upon our population, and a great part of the blame for this state of things must be laid at the door of the Churches. We are apathetic, and take the character-

building hopes of the nation too much for granted. Half a dozen earnest men out of a congregation such as I address this morning, determined to take this evil by the throat, could do much to make the disgraceful facts of these census revelations impossible in the England of the future."

The amount of apathy in the Churches towards matters affecting the welfare of the people cannot be overlooked. For instance, when, some months ago, the Rev. J. Heggie, Barry, brought forward a motion at the Arbroath Presbytery of the Church of Scotland suggesting the appointment of a committee to consider what steps might be taken to advance the temperance cause in the district, the Rev. Andrew Douglas moved the previous question. "Total abstinence," he held, "was in no sense of the word a Christian virtue; and far from the Church of Scotland being commended for its action in regard to this matter, he thought very much of it was to be lamented. They might as well have a committee of Presbytery appointed to consider the evils of tight-lacing, which did a great deal of harm to an important section of the community." Equally noteworthy were the remarks of the Rev. A. R. Gibson, Carnoustie, who seconded Mr. Douglas's amendment. "It was," he said, "a slur on the ministers of the Church of Scotland, and an indication that the General Assembly did not believe that they were doing their duty, that five men should be appointed to go up and down the country preaching temperance, which, as he understood it, was a very small item of the moral law.

He was an advocate of temperance all round, but he held that the use of alcoholic liquors was not one of the greatest evils in human society. One of the greatest evils in human society was dishonesty, and he would give a guinea—if he had it—to the General Assembly if they would employ five men to advocate common honesty.” Mr. Heggie’s motion, it should be added, was carried by six votes to three. The sheer ignorance and lack of experience of life displayed in these amazing statements are appalling. Certainly common honesty is much to be desired in Church life, as elsewhere; but anything quite so painfully “honest” as the attitude of Mr. Douglas and his supporter has not been observed in Edinburgh. No one, however, can shut his eyes to the fact that even in the Church in the metropolis there is a lack of appreciation of the magnitude of an evil which threatens to bring disaster on the country.

There should be no cause to aid which the force of a strong moral influence is needed, to which the Church should not readily give its support. But instead of that, the Churches too frequently make fine distinctions and show curious inconsistency regarding public questions affecting the moral condition of the people. When it is inconvenient to deal with them they are dubbed political and banned as being outwith the province of the Church, but when the Churches want to make a show of moral rectitude they vote severe censure on the Sultan of Turkey or pass high-sounding and sometimes senseless resolutions about intemperance or Sabbath observance. In face of problems demand-

The fine art of finessing.

ing the most positive attitudes, involving points of hostility to wealthy members, the Churches are too often helpless and silent. Lately, the Edinburgh Presbytery of the United Free Church actually closed an attempt even to discuss the question of Chinese labour, on the ground that such a discussion might subject them to the charge of entering the sphere of party politics. Certainly it is not desirable that the Churches as such should know in the State one party more than another. But the State is frequently called upon to deal with matters directly involving moral issues, and it is the duty, as it surely ought to be the privilege, of the Church, to lead the people, from a standpoint far above all party strife, in the application of Christian principles of justice in public as well as in private concerns. The Churches, however, have still to learn that they cannot, with impunity, "dissever their message from the issues which concern the entire community. It is indeed their mission first of all to provide a means of worshipping the Deity, but reverence for God is no excuse for ignoring the rights and duties of men."

Priestism.

This whole attitude is hardly surprising to those who are familiar with a recent trend of things in the Church in the capital. In the United Free Church in Edinburgh, for example—and the same kind of influence is apparent in other Churches—an undue, if not a dominant influence is now being exerted by a growing clerical party. To this may be traced the real cause of a great deal of the recent ineffectiveness of the Church. Scotsmen have had the reputation

of being attached to their ministers, but they do not like, and cannot be made to follow, priests—at all events where sacerdotalism is not accompanied, as in many cases in the Church of England it is, by a saving socialistic instinct. Unknown to many plain sons of the Church throughout the country, only dimly present to the consciousness of many bewildered men in the city, who only know there is something wrong somewhere, it is much to be feared that the canker of sacerdotalism is beginning to eat into the vitals of the Church. Priestism obtrudes insidiously in the worship of the Church, and the touch of its deadly hand paralyses healthy action. In one direction its effect is seen in the apeing of foreign forms, under which congregations are uncomfortable, not having the means of protest; and in another direction, in vision and energies selfishly limited to sectarian interests.

All, however, is not yet lost. By resolute measures the mistakes of the past may still be averted. The field is still before the Churches. The waste material of human life is lying at their doors. Would that they now set their house in order, and even yet put forth strong hands to arrest the forces of wastage! Let the days of pottering be done; for

“ Who goes gleaning
Hedge-side chance blades, while full-sheaved
Stands cornfields by him ? ”

It is hardly within the present scope to draw attention to the kind of men fitted to be ministers, The men and
preaching
wanted.

and the certainty of speech to be expected from them. But a word or two on that subject, mostly in the language of other men—all of them ministers—may not be out of place here.

At a meeting of Hawick United Free Presbytery held on 12th October, 1903, Dr. George Robson, ex-Moderator of the United Free Church Assembly, delivered an address in which he stated that “the basis of all true Christian work was personal contact with God, and that the greatest need of the age was certitude in reference to Divine things. The lack of certitude in the utterances of some who professed to be Christian teachers was painful. Their teachings seemed to amount to nothing more than an indication of probabilities amid a sea of uncertainties.”

Probably the lack of certitude which Dr. Robson so justly deplotes may be traceable to an evil referred to by Dr. Robertson, of Whittingehame, the Church of Scotland Lecturer in Pastoral Theology for session 1903-4. At Aberdeen University, dealing with the subject of “A Call to the Ministry,” he said—“The ministry was not a profession merely; it was, in the fullest sense of the word, a vocation. Entering on the ministry without a true call to it—from this how much the Church had suffered! Among all the defects and weaknesses which had hurtfully affected the Church, none were to be more regretted than those which came from men becoming ministers without a true call to the office.”

Again, at the meetings of the Baptist Union of

Scotland held in Edinburgh in October, 1903, the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A., Leicester, said that "what they wanted in the ministry were real men, who were in touch with their fellow-men and who understood their fellow-men—real men, and not stiff and starched officials, not ordained functionaries, not priests; God forbid! not neat and spotless things done up in holy orders and millinery, not men who desired to be honoured and respected for their office's sake, but rather for their work's sake."

And lastly, a sentence from Dr. Horton on the "Religious Life of London" (the result of the *Daily News* Census)—"The manhood of London is drawn where there is the clear, strong, manly preaching of the Gospel as the chief attraction of the service. Ritualism is everywhere a declining force."

A Church whose ministers have never had a call, and who come to their pulpits with an uncertain or a negative message; a Church whose ministers devote more attention to the correct adjustment of millinery than to the putting on of the spirit militant, or who think their duty is done when they have "performed" the form and order of service—such a Church will never have any influence with the masses, and need not be expected to lift a finger to remedy social ills.

VI.—A FEW CONCLUSIONS.

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ONE or two things stand out clear.

(1) The Church needs men of different gifts ^{Requirements.} for different duties. A mere preacher is of no use where a worker is wanted, nor can a man who is only a scholar be a leader to the people. A special type of man is needed for work among the masses— young, vigorous, in touch with men, not “ordained functionaries,” but men of vision who can turn vision into resolve and resolve into action, and the Church must be prepared to give them. To quote Dr. Watson again—“Our reform would also require that the Church shall have power to send men to the places they are capable of filling, and from time to time shall remove them to other places as may be best for them and for the Church, which is more than all her ministers.”

(2) Two or more men should be associated in this work—not as bishop and curate, or colleague and successor, but as joint-bearers of the stress and duty of the day.

(3) Poor districts should not be hitched on to fashionable congregations. The people ought to feel that the churches are their own, and all sides of the people's life must be touched.

(4) Buildings must be modernised. What is wanted is not architectural aids to devotion so much as first-rate, comfortable, well-lighted halls, with plenty of side-rooms.

(5) A thorough reform in government is needed, under which ministers would be set free to devote themselves to that part of the work to which they have been more particularly called.

(6) Above all, the Church must make good its claim that the Gospel is the true dynamic at the root of all social reform.

The ineptitude of the Church is staggering. On paper and on Sunday Edinburgh is apparently a religious city. It is studded with churches, and has religious organisations more than extensive enough for the work. But many of the churches are obsolete in men, methods, and buildings. The pulpit, with honourable exceptions, is apologetic in tone. Church-going is too much the Sunday recreation of the middle classes. The hold of the Churches on the masses is growing feebler every year. In particular, they are swiftly losing influence and being discredited with working-men. They do little to brighten life, and may almost be said to hinder much that would bring gladness into it. The Church is to the people the representative of God—not yet altogether a discredited representative, although after all these years she seems incapable or unwilling to tackle moral evil. It is premised that it is the will of God that His Church on earth should be in the forefront of the fight against oppression and injustice and all wrong. But when she is called upon to take this high place she folds her hands in unctuous declaration that the duty of the Church is to preach

the Gospel. If, in truth, she did preach the Gospel, if there were in all the pulpits of Edinburgh "the clear, strong, manly preaching of the gospel," backed by clear, strong, manly action, many of our problems would be well on the way to solution. Surely the Churches cannot intend to preach any Gospel to the men of the slums, to the one-third of our citizens who are living in crowded dwellings, to the one-fifth who have not enough to eat, to the large crowd who are in the grip of alcohol, without putting all her energy into an effort to make these things impossible for those who want to avoid them, and to put sweetening and strengthening influences in their place. Christ meant that such things should not be, and it cannot but be that the mute appeal of the dehumanised of our cities ascends to Heaven.

Many good friends of the Churches have looked wistfully during these last years at their "genteel indifference to the great issues of the present and the hard fights that are being fought for righteousness." They look even more wistfully now at that great Church, of splendid possibilities (as it has been of notable achievement), now undergoing trial, and, half fearing, they are tremulously expectant. Will the Church face the question of the loss of the people of the cities as seriously as she faces the loss of material resources? Will she exercise the same anxiety to rid herself of all that savours of priestliness as she does to free herself of ultra-Calvinism? Her problems are great. If she will face them worthily she need never fear for the support of the people of

Scotland. But she must make it clear, by work and sacrifice, that her sympathies ring true, that she will trust the people, that she will live with and for the people, and that she will right the wrongs of the people.

Trial comes not haphazard to a Church. He who stands among the Golden Candlesticks surely has a message for the Church in Scotland. Everything depends on how she hears and how she acts. If, humbly listening, and ready with courage to act, she catches the accent of a higher Voice calling her onward, and, rousing herself in the new strength which, if she cares, may now come to her, she casts off the shackles of Mammon, and sacerdotalism, and indifference, and sloth, then both for her and for Scotland a new day of hope may be ushered in. But to this end she will have to give a much less equivocal answer than in bye-gone days, in deed as well as in word, to the challenge which comes down to her through the centuries—*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that thou break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?*

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